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SUBJECT: OCTOBER 12 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: DPRK NUCLEAR TEST; ROH AND RICE VISITS; NEPAL BORDER SHOOTING; TAIWAN INVITATION TO APEC

¶1. Key Points made at the October 12 Press Briefing were:

-- The DPRK must not further worsen the Korean peninsula nuclear situation.

-- Six-Party Talks remain the best method for resolving the crisis, however direct dialogue between the United States and DPRK would help narrow differences.

-- China remains firmly opposed to any military action in the Korean peninsula.

-- Japanese consideration of a missile defense system, in light of the DPRK test, is a matter for Japan.

-- South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun will visit China October 13 to meet with President Hu Jintao.

-- China and the United States are discussing a possible visit to China by Secretary Rice.

-- The MFA has made no contact with Nepal regarding the border shooting of a Tibetan nun two weeks ago.

DPRK Nuclear Test

¶2. At the October 12 regularly scheduled MFA Press Briefing, Spokesperson Liu Jianchao said the DPRK must stop any further actions that could further worsen the situation. Repeating the PRC's official position, Liu said China hopes all parties act responsibly in "a cool-headed manner" and resume the Six-Party Talks.

¶3. China will continue to consult with other UN Security Council members on appropriate action that will help establish a denuclearized Korean peninsula, said Liu. Asked by Reuters whether China opposed Chapter 7 sanctions outright or just in part, Liu said that all parties of the UNSC have proposed solutions to the issue, and all measures, including Chapter 7 and the U.S.-draft resolution, were being discussed. China also has a comprehensive resolution for consideration. Liu was unable to comment on any specific article of the resolution, but asserted that China remains firmly opposed to any military action to resolve the problem in the Korean peninsula. Any measures, including Chapter 7, should be studied as to their ability to benefit denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and stability in Northeast Asia, he said.

¶4. Liu reiterated China's support of the Six-Party Talks process as being the best, most practical forum for resolving the North Korean nuclear situation. Responding to a UPI reporter's question on whether China supported bilateral talks between the United States and the DPRK, Liu said direct talks would help to narrow their differences but at this stage differences were so great that the Talks remain the

best opportunity to build trust and the best method for resolution.

15. Liu sidestepped several question on whether President Hu Jintao had spoken directly to Kim Jong-Il after the test and at what level China was in contact with the DPRK. China had stayed in contact with other parties, including the other members of the UNSC, the EU and Canada. He had no information on whether a special envoy or delegation would be sent to the DPRK.

16. China remains dedicated to the development of a "good neighbor relationship" with the DPRK, provided that the main purpose of economic assistance is to help the DPRK improve the livelihoods and conditions of the population, Liu said.

"PUNISH" VS. "PUNITIVE"

17. A Hong Kong commercial radio reporter asked Liu to distinguish between his October 10 statement that "punishment" should not be used when discussing measures to respond to North Korea and UN Ambassador Wang Guangya's comment that measures should be "punitive," prompting Liu to state that both comments represent the view of the Chinese government. Liu stressed that the point of both comments was that all parties should focus on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, as opposed to how best to punish the DPRK.

JAPAN REACTION AND MISSILE DEFENSE

18. China understands the concerns of all parties in the region, but hopes that any actions taken in response to the

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DPRK nuclear test strengthen stability on the peninsula, Liu said. Specifically, Japan's reconsideration of a missile defense system was a matter of Japan's internal affairs, he said in response to a question by a Japanese reporter.

ROK PRESIDENT ROH TO VISIT TOMORROW

19. South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun will visit China October 12 to meet with President Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao and Wu Bangguo. Liu said discussions would focus on China-ROK relations and the current situation on the Korean peninsula.

POSSIBLE SECRETARY RICE VISIT; TANG IN U.S.

110. A reporter asked whether Secretary Rice was going to visit China next week. Liu confirmed the United States and China were discussing a possible visit, but there was no agreement as yet. In response to a question by the same reporter, Liu said President Hu's Special Envoy Tang Jiaxuan is in the United States discussing the latest Korean peninsula developments.

CHINA-NEPAL BORDER SHOOTING

111. Liu denied knowledge of the alleged shooting by Chinese border patrol at Tibetans along the China-Nepal border. A reporter for AP pointed out the incident was over two weeks old and that surely by now the MFA had been in contact with the Nepalese government, but Liu said that if it had happened the appropriate Chinese authority was investigating the incident, not the MFA. A reporter for the Scotsman claimed western climbers had witnessed the incident and photographed the bodies of two who had been killed. Liu said he doubted the reporter's ensuing assertion that the climbers were then contacted by Chinese officials in Kathmandu to discuss the incident.

PRESSURE ON VIETNAM TO NOT INVITE TAIWAN TO APEC

¶12. In response to a Taiwanese newspaper reporter seeking comment on whether China pressured Vietnam not to invite Taiwan to APEC, Liu said all parties understood the One China principle and China hoped Vietnam would handle invitations to APEC accordingly.

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